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THE Maui News

My Son

(Concluded)
VII.

The days passed, the weeks and the months.

The gross menace which I had once in pleasantry made to my Evangeline was becoming realized, and already it appeared that it would be exceeded by the reality. My wife, consoled as best she could by the dress-maker, was resigned.

I began to hope that my child would be a boy, for he would be a colossus. Naturally, I said nothing to my Evangeline, but I regarded with some apprehension the diminutive dresses which she was so happy in making, for they appeared to me entirely too small; however I kept my reflections to myself.

One day I secretly took one of these little dresses, and I went to try it on one of the plaster babies, the one who laughed. The thing was not so easily accomplished, but I finally succeeded.

My little statue made a comical figure, so accoutred, and I did not wish to deprive my wife of the singular spectacle. She came and laughed, and then I made the remark, without appearing to insist particularly, that the dress appeared to me a trifle tight.

— For the statue — said Evangeline; — but for him it would be too large. I have made his dresses larger than the pattern.

— He will be large — observed I pleasantly.

— He will be as he should be — replied my wife resignedly.

Our son was already living before he was born; he consoled us; he improved us; he educated our minds and our hearts.

It was through him that my wife apprehended, though the contrary may appear true, how cold and desolate a house is where there is no fire in the stove, where there is no daily sacrifice of bread and wine for breakfast, for dinner, and, please God, for supper.

And he it was who taught me to renovate my scientific baggage, without despairing of the client who never came.

He was wise, prudent, shrewd, indulgent and severe; he found all the roads which led to our hearts; he lent an occult meaning to everything; he refined us so that we could know and comprehend him; he rendered us attentive to the life which moved around us; he gave us pity, patience and resignation; when the moment arrived, he infused us with courage, strength and audacity. He rendered me both humble and proud, as a man should be who thinks and feels. We talked about him; we obliged ourselves to represent him as a living spirit at different ages, so as to be able to divine on the spur of the moment his future needs; he opened, for us a thousand hidden caskets which held in them the little verities. Yes, our son was truly living before he was born; and never had friend or relative penetrated so deeply into our hearts or minds as had this unborn infant.

We calmly waited, but with the impatience of those who wait for an old friend long since dead, to whom it has been given to return to the world.

The only one who did not know how to wait with tranquillity was my father-in-law.

In the first days of January, he fell upon us unexpectedly, saying: — He should arrive to day, or at least to-morrow, because there is no time to lose. — He spoke of his grandson who, obediently, on the morrow, warned my poor Evangeline of his arrival.

There was a disordered silence in the house. Evangeline commenced by weeping because she was afraid, then she mastered herself and I saw her, all terrified, go and come about the house like a heroine.

I had more than half lost my head, and my father-in-law had lost his en-

tirely; he went to and fro about the room, touching the swaddling clothes, the little gowns, the little caps, without doing anything at all, and believing in good faith that he was rendering us powerful aid. Then came the nurse; then came a lady friend, pressed into service; then came the doctor, who would remain with us in his parlour.

It seemed to me, after all this came and went, that a profound silence fell on all our little rooms; I was as if I had lost my memory; my father-in-law continually came and planted himself in front of me, gazing into my eyes and not saying a word; while as for me, I never took my frightened eyes from the face of the doctor who, tranquil and indifferent, read a book, which he had found on a little table.

But when, through the half open door there came to us a heart rending groan, I became so pale and my father-in-law became so red that the doctor arose, touched the pulses of both of us without having the air of having done so, and begged us to go out to walk for a quarter of an hour.

— What can you do here?

It seemed that we could do much, but in reality we could do nothing; and the doctor explained more clearly his thoughts by saying that if by chance his aid should become necessary, we would prove ourselves a serious embarrassment to him.

— But it will not be necessary? — demanded I.

It will possibly not be necessary; but listen to me, go out for a walk.

We went, like two scholars who had been chastised by the master.

On reaching the street, we instinctively stopped, both my father-in-law and myself, to listen if we could hear another of those groans which had so touched our hearts. If we had heard one, we certainly would have gone back. But we heard nothing; we walked away.

My father-in-law, placing his right arm through mine and feeling my heart fiercely beating, tried to console me in his manner.

— This will be a boy — said he to me.

I made no reply; I hastened my steps toward the ramparts.

The country was desolate, the horse-chestnut despoiled of its leaves and covered with snow, the sand of the paths hard with ice.

I saw no longer the beautiful fruits, nor the travelling ants; the bitter cold weather held all creatures huddled, only some finished sparrows flew here and there.

At a remembered turn, I recognized the acacia which had held me, and I glanced among the despoiled branches, seeking the nest — it had disappeared; certainly, instead of warming a little winged family, it had made sport for a gamin.

With what different feelings I saw all these things! My Evangeline suffered cruelly, and I could nearly have renounced a happiness which would cost her so much suffering. My father-in-law, after having encouraged me ten times by saying: — This will be a boy — found, in his turn, a moment of discouragement, and said to me as if speaking to himself: — Suppose it should not be a boy!

But I smiled, thinking that, luckily, if this should not be a boy, it would be a girl.

All at once the impatient grandfather shrugged his shoulders and said to me with an assured air:

— Come, by this time it is born.

And I felt a sweet thrill run through all my body.

We walked with accelerated steps, as if we were really waited for.

On entering the door of the house, we looked at each other; no one was there to tell us the result; the porter, abandoned to his occupations in another room, hardly disturbed himself to glance at us.

It seemed to me that he should have known all about it, — in place of that, he knew nothing at all, the wretch!

And then I saw them come out

from the night where they were hidden, the thousand cruel but impotent adversaries of human happiness: — terrors, suspicions, horrible menaces of catastrophe...

I started to run; I mounted the stairs precipitately; but all at once I returned panting and threw myself in the arms of my father-in-law.

I had heard the cry which is a note from paradise, the little voice which is music, the murmur of complaint which is a caress.

SAW THE FURNACE.

But the Result of the Inspection Was Very Unsatisfactory.

The host looked at his guest. "Come down in the basement," he said, with a slight wink. "I want to show you my furnace."

The hostess glanced up, with a queer little smile. "Mr. Stiverson is quite daft about his furnace, Mr. Jollyboy," she said. "I've no doubt he'll have you down there every time he opens a damper."

The host turned away and choked slightly, and then they stepped down the stairs together.

Mr. Stiverson went straight to the furnace room and, reaching above the bricked in heater, pulled down a squat black bottle and a small glass. He filled the latter.

"Here's to the furnace," he said, with a hoarse chuckle, as he passed the glass to his guest. "Have to be a little careful, you know, on account of the old lady. Best woman in the world, of course, but prejudiced. How's that?" The guest gulped and took down the contents of the glass. "Now, what would you call that?"

"Well," replied the visitor, with a horrible grimace, "to be frank with you, I would call it a mighty good sample of spoiled cider vinegar."

"Eh! What?" And the host hastily poured out a glass and took a mouthful. "Wow-w-w! So it is. Hang it all, the old lady has discovered the hiding place! Wonder what in thunder she did with the real stuff? Heavens! What a contemptible trick! Let's go up stairs." And they went.

"How did Mr. Jollyboy like the furnace?" inquired the hostess as she looked up, with a pleasant smile. The acridulated guest did his best to call up a smile in return.

"It's a splendid furnace—I should say furnace," he remarked. "I don't think I ever saw one with better appointments outside and inside."

"And on top, too?" queried the hostess sweetly. Then she pointed to the open register at her feet.

"It's quite wonderful," she added, "how distinctly the sound of voices in the furnace room below comes up through the register. I could hear every word you said!"

Then she laughed softly.

— But the men made no comment. —

Cleveland Plain Dealer.

His Literary Routine.

An author filled out as follows a question blank from one of the literary review syndicates recently:

"Do you burn the midnight oil?"

"Yes—when the gas bill's due."

"What time do you rise?"

"Whenever the bill collector knocks."

"What is your daily exercise?"

"Climbing trees to avoid the bailiff."

"When do you dine?"

"Whenever I can."

"What is your chief study?"

"How to pay the rent, appease the butcher, comfort the baker, silence the groceryman and settle the gas bill."

Atlanta Constitution.

An Inimical Rumor.

"Did you say that I scattered money right and left in my campaigns?" asked Senator Sorghum.

"No, sir."

"Well, somebody said it, and it was a mighty mean trick. The first thing I know they'll have the people who were going to vote for me anyhow thinking it's a sheer waste of money to go up to the polls and cast an honest ballot."

—Washington Star.

And He Looked It.

Auntie—What! You don't mean to say all those boys are waiting to take you to school?

Elsie—Oh, no! One of them don't go to our school.—New York Journal.

A Bargain Offered.

Editor—Well, young woman, if the story suits me, I will pay you \$15 for it.

Young Lady Author (persuasively)—Oh, come, now. Buy it without reading it, and I'll let you have it for \$10.—Brooklyn Life.

Polite.

Head Waiter—Shall I send a waiter to wait on you, sir?

Guest (who has been waiting in vain for 30 minutes)—I am compelled to request this extreme privilege even though I know it disturbs your system.—Life.

Needless Adjectives.

Little Willie—Say, pa, what's a redundancy of expression?

Pa—Using more words than are necessary to express one's meaning, such as "wealthy leechman," "wealthy plumber," etc.—Chicago News.

Poetry Editors and Poets Excepted.

A man must be patient with every bore who comes in, for the reason that the man may some day have \$2 to spend with him.—Atchison Globe.

Always the Wrong Thing.

"There's a trust now to control the output of peanuts."

"Well, what we need is a trust to control the output of peanut shells."—Chicago Record.

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SPELLING REFORM.

A fisherman sat on the quay, Partaking of afternoon tea, When a lady came by, Who winked with one eye And whispered, "No sugar for me."

A man was committed to goal, For stealing a tenpenny nail, The judge was asked, And gave him six pence, Without any option of bail.

A grand old bootmaker of Hawarden Used to spend the whole day in his garden, When his friends said him why, He looked up at the sky, But only replied, "Beg your pardon."

It is said that Nathaniel Phoenix Loved wholly on bread and broad bismocks, When invited to eat, But a morsel of meat, He answered, "Just think what it might cost!"

A thoughtful young butcher named Mowll Had a tender and sensitive soul, When he slaughtered a sheep, He always would weep, And pay for a funeral toll.

A sailor who sported a queue Was civil to all that he knew, If he came under fire, He used to retire, And say, with a bow, "After ye!"

The dowager Duke of Buccleugh Was famous for Irish strength, When asked, "Do you use Any onion in stews?" He cautiously answered, "A leugh."

A groom of the royal demesne Was the finest old man ever seen, But he kept out of sight In a ditch day and night For fear of annoying the queue.

The amiable Commodore Haigh Set sail down the channel one daigh, When asked, "Do you know Which direction to go?" He answered, "I'm feeling my waigh."

One autumn the Marquis of Steyne Shot a partridge with infinite peyne, Then he cried: "I'm afraid Of the havoc I've made! See—only one feather remains!" —Westminster Gazette.

Pointed.

There are wrongs that can never be righted; There are wounds that when time cannot heal, We speak, and some fair hope is blighted; Words oft are more deadly than steel!

There are bruises that linger forever; We say but a word, and, alas! Though we long to recall it, we never Can give the old happiness back!

—Chicago Times-Herald.

Lost Privilege.

Mean Man—I'll never lend him money again.

Other Man—Why not? Hasn't he paid you?

Mean Man—Paid me! Why, he paid me two days after he borrowed the money; didn't even give me a chance to say to my friends that I'd be lucky if I ever got it back.—Syracuse Herald.

How He Should Look at It.

"Well," said the English yachtsman, "you have beaten us."

"You shouldn't put it in that way," was the reply. "We did no more than the instincts of self preservation demanded. We were obliged to come in first in order to prevent you from beating us."—Washington Star.

High Rollers.

Mrs. Stubb—John, here is an account of some writer going out too far in the surf. For an incredible length of time he battled with the wild breakers.

Mr. Stubb—I'll bet I guess he must have been one of those struggling authors we hear so much about.—Chicago News.

Following Directions.

"Mrs. Stuffem was told by that eminent actress who reduced her weight 25 pounds by dieting to strictly avoid all starchy preparations."

"Yes."

"So now she has her liven done up limp."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Matter of Necessity.

Chicago Man—What's the fare to St. Louis?

Ticket Broker—Do you want to go there today?

Chicago Man—No, of course I don't want to, but I am compelled to.—Chicago News.

A Side Light on History.

Teacher—For what else was Julius Caesar noted?

Tommy Tucker (who had studied the lesson some-what hastily)—His great strength, ma'am. He threw a bridge across the Rhine.—Chicago Tribune.

What Profits It?

"Don't waste yoh time talkin' 'bout yoh neighbors," said Uncle Eben. "Yoh neighbors is probably talkin' 'bout yoh, an yoh kin look aroun foh yohself an see how much good it's doin' 'em."—Washington Star.

What Spoiled It.

"What a doleful expression your photograph has on!"

"Yes; I was feeling all right until the photographer told me to look pleasant."—Detroit Free Press.

The Persimmonville Yacht Race.

The Captain of the Possum-Gemmen, I reckon we might jes' as well gib up de race. All in favor ob quittin say "aye."

First Mate—Hurry up dat vote, cap'n, or you won't be able to git a quorum.—New York World.

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